



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES CHILD SUPPORT ADVISORY BOARD

Los Angeles County
Board of Supervisors

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2009

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CHILD SUPPORT ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES FEBRUARY 26, 2009

Present

3rd District, Lucy T. Eisenberg, Esq., Chair
4th District, Jean Cohen
4th District, Scarlet Treu
5th District, Susan Speir, Vice Chair
Gene A. Franklin, Sr., CIO
Silvia Valencia, DPSS
David Jetton, Superior Court

Absent

2nd District, Paula Leftwich
2nd District, Pat Miller
3rd District, Honey Kessler Amado
5th District, Reginald Brass
Susan Jakubowski, DCFS
Steven J. Golightly, Director, CSSD
Mary Lawrence, DCSS
Debbie Strong, Franchise Tax Board

Guests

Lisa Garrett, CSSD
Lori Cruz, CSSD
Jennifer Coultas, CSSD
William Schwartz, CSSD
Lawrence Hill, 721 Union
Kristine Reiser-Juick, Superior Court

Staff

Lee Millen, Executive Office, BOS
Andrew Sevrin, Executive Office, BOS

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Eisenberg called the meeting to order at 9:41 a.m. in Room 372, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration.

APPROVE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 11, 2008

On motion of Member Treu, seconded by Member Franklin and unanimously carried, the minutes of December 11, 2008, were approved as submitted.

Chair Eisenberg introduced Kristine Reiser-Juick, newly appointed Superior Court representative, who will replace David Jetton following this meeting. Mr. Jetton is retiring with thirty years of County service. She wished Mr. Jetton a very happy retirement. Ms. Reiser-Juick comes from the Central Civil West Facilitator's Office of the Superior Court. Lisa Garrett, Chief Deputy Director, CSSD, added that both Mr.

Jetton and Ms. Reiser-Juick have been of great assistance to CSSD. Because of their assistance the Court allowed CSSD to make a special calendar for modifications, incarcerated persons, and persons with supplemental child care moved to the Court. Mr. Jetton advised that Ms. Resier-Juick will be a valuable resource to the CSAB.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO INCLUDE: STATE AND COUNTY BUDGETS; POST-CONVERSION UPDATE; CALL CENTER TRANSITION TO ECSS

Lisa Garrett, Chief Deputy Director, CSSD, presented the Director's Report on behalf of Director Golightly, who could not attend the meeting because of a scheduling conflict.

State and County Budgets: The State approved budget proposes to address the \$42 billion deficit through a variety of solutions, including a spending reduction affecting education, health and human services agencies, and by ordering furloughs per month through June 2009. In spite of the furloughs the State has made every effort not to inconvenience clients with DCSS services. Other solutions to the deficit include the redirection of tobacco and real estate tax, vehicle license fees, and reducing dependent care credits.

The State anticipates receiving \$10 billion from the federal economic stimulus package. Budget restrictions include a "rainy day" fund that would ban legislator pay increases during budget short falls, and spending limits that under certain provisions in the budget will require voter approval in May. However, no budget adjustments will be seen until June. Flat-funding for local child support allocations (\$695 million) continue a trend since 2003.

The State proposed revenue stabilization fund addresses flat-funding and equates to about \$18.7 million that once in effect will assist child support agencies. Los Angeles County is scheduled to receive 20% of the DCSS' \$695 million budget. Additionally, DCSS should receive \$7-10 million for each of the five Federal performance measures for which the Federal government pays \$2 for each dollar paid by the State.

The CSSD receives 34% of its budget from the State and the balance from the Federal government. The EDP budget has been reduced by more than half following completion of CSE. CSSD's funding has decreased and employee staffing levels and benefit costs have increased. CSSD is working with the CEO to remain on budget and meet its departmental goals.

Post-Conversion Update: 550 cases a day are opened in CSE, and an increase in presumed rather than actual income cases are anticipated.

In response to Vice Chair Speir, Lori Cruz, Deputy Director, CSSD, reported that when a case is closed in CSE an automated closing process occurs, and collections continue until the case is terminated. However, a fix should be in place soon to remedy this problem.

One of the major obstacles for CSSD regarding ARS to CSE conversion was interfacing with welfare agencies. To address this concern, DPSS implemented an enhancement to the single index system on CSE with CITRIX, which enables access to the LEADER system; this new process should be in effect soon. Silvia Valencia, DPSS, added that in the past CSSD staff experienced problems with LEADER access, however, DPSS has resolved the issue and full access is made available.

Call Center Transition to ECSS: The transition planned for Monday, February 23, 2009 was delayed because of network problems causing a slow down in pop-up screens with caller identification, case information, and other related issues. IT is looking at the problems with the help of DCSS IT, ISD staff and IBM techs and intensive testing is being performed to remedy the situation.

In response to Chair Eisenberg, Ms. Garrett explained that callers are initially connected to the State Call Center, an inquiry is made on the County of residence, and the caller is redirected to the ECSS line. Currently, only forty operators are available to make these referrals. Vice Chair Speir added that the wait time to be transferred from the State to the County can be as

long as 15 minutes, and inquired if the State is tracking abandoned and deflected calls. Ms. Garrett confirmed that data is reported and agreed to provide it at the next meeting. In response to Member Cohen, Ms. Garrett noted that a caller can not call directly into the County call center, but rather is directed to the Statewide Call Center first.

William Schwartz, CSSD, explained the call-in process by saying that when the caller keys in their case number the Call Center will route the call to the County connected to the case number. The forty operators are not intended to take every call, but to take special calls. Regular calls will be routed through the automated system to their respective Counties. Vice Chair Speir expressed concern that many clients not knowing their case number will still need an operator referral rather than an automated message. Jennifer Coultas, CSSD, reported that 50,000 wallet cards were mailed out to clients indicating their case number for caller convenience and case accessibility.

In response to Chair Eisenberg, Lori Cruz reported that prior to the CSE system the CCSD on average would generate 5,000 case openings per month. However, with the current 550 cases opening per day, the case load has quadrupled to 20,000 openings per month. Contributing factors include a faltering economy, about 20% of County residents are receiving some form of cash aid, and General Relief offices are filled and DPSS and CalWorks cases are rising dramatically. Silvia Valencia reported a 25-50% increase in CalWorks applications during the final quarter of 2008.

In response to Chair Eisenberg, Ms. Garrett and Mr. Schwartz advised that specific case activity data for January will not be available for another few months and can be presented at a forthcoming meeting. In response to Vice Chair Speir, Ms. Garrett replied that a report on Welfare Retrieval Issues will be submitted at the next meeting.

DCSS REPORT TO INCLUDE: STATE BUDGET; PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING DIB/UIB CASES

Lisa Garrett reported that Mary Lawrence, DCSS, will not be participating in future CSAB meetings, however, she and her staff will respond to requests via Ms. Garrett.

Regarding the report on handling DIB/UIB cases, Mary Lawrence reports there are no new developments on DIB/UIB case reporting since her e-mail report last December. Chair Eisenberg proposed drafting a letter to Ms. Lawrence requesting that the State advise the County on current UIB/DIB procedures.

REVIEW AND DISCUSS PERFORMANCE MEASURES – WILLIAM SCHWARTZ

William Schwartz reported that goals listed on the CSSD 2008-2009 Performance Management Plan. The data quality and quantity is a concern in that the CS1257 is a monthly gathering of data on performance caseload numbers that the State takes from each County. The State publishes its 1257 monthly, and CSSD staff extrapolates totals and distributes to its respective Divisions. The Division data is not particularly reliable, i.e. with the new system during the transition the numbers don't match the larger 1257. CSSD is presently working on the problem and should have the discrepancies cleared up.

Paternity establishment in Los Angeles County can be greater than 100%, due to the fact that the State uses out-of-wedlock birth numbers not based on County data, but by State data, and cases with arrears payments can always go up but never down because case closures appear closed on the State system the following year.

CSTATS was initiated last year in an attempt to relate performance and accountability. CSSD would meet monthly to review Divisional numbers and discuss, for example, increases in wage assignments and its causes. Reports are compiled from the State and other agencies as source material for the CSTATS report. As a result, certain items are tracked and the CSTATS report reflects good and weak performance by division, and which need improvement. Division staff are asked in the form of a survey how they could improve performance, including any recommended strategies.

Case orders were tracked by the method used to create them, however, following conversion, CSSD no longer has access to that data. CSE provides information that the Department uses, but has nothing to do with the structure of CSTATS. In response to Chair Eisenberg, he reported that order calculation was available on the ARS system but CSE doesn't track that data; however, the State does have access to this data. Chair Eisenberg proposed drafting a letter to the Director of DCSS regarding the need to distribute order calculation data to LCSAs.

REVIEW BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2008/2009; LIKELY EFFECT OF RECESSION AND UNEMPLOYMENT ON PERFORMANCE – LISA GARRETT

Lisa Garrett reported that the Business Plan, created several months ago following the County's request for outlined goals for the next Fiscal Year, include strategies already competed. In addition, a separate Plan, the PIAP (Performance Improvement Action Plan), requires State approval; the CSSD Business Plan shares some of the same items.

The Business Plan has the following six goals:

- Goal 1: Ensure that the percentage of child support cases with paternity established is at least 100%
- Goal 2: Ensure that at least 80% of cases have support orders
- Goal 3: Increase current support from 48.34% to 53%
- Goal 4: Increase the percentage of cases with arrears payments from 49.65% to 55%
- Goal 5: Increase total collections of \$517.5 by 3%
- Goal 6: Successful conversion to CSE

Areas in Goal 6 have not been completed. Unemployed customers have been urged to visit a

CSSD office for an order modification; an outreach has not been initiated as yet.

REVIEW AND APPROVE SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

Following discussion, on motion of Vice Chair Speir, seconded by Member Treu and unanimously carried, the Semi-Annual report was approved as submitted.

DISCUSS HOW/WHETHER TO CONTINUE CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE

Vice Chair Speir, Customer Service Committee Chair, reported on the current situation of the Committee in regards to her and Chair Eisenberg's viewpoint. They disagree with management's choice on issues brought to the Committee. At issue is the desire to discuss custodial and non-custodial parent issues. Due to an impasse, the Committee has now disbanded.

Vice Chair Speir proposed a sub-committee comprised of CSSD personnel that would meet on a quarterly basis and discuss more specific issues. In response to Chair Eisenberg, Member Treu volunteered to participate, and Lisa Garrett designated herself as the CSAB contact for the sub-committee, pending Director Golightly's approval. The sub-committee would identify and report to the CSAB on pertinent child support issues.

MEDICAL INSURANCE; UPDATE ON FEDERAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES; HOW DATE IS GATHERED AND REPORTED; DATA ON MEDI-CAL SAVINGS – LORI CRUZ

Lori Cruz reported that the Federal government had emphasized for several years the need to establish and track a sixth performance measure, a health insurance performance measure. It will track how many cases are provided with a health insurance order.

At a recent conference the federal government indicated that the establishment and tracking of health insurance performance measures would be delayed until 2014, which would give agencies leeway in preparing for the performance measure. The first step would involve the custodial or non-custodial parent ensuring enrollment in the employer's health insurance, and that the parent has the ability to utilize health insurance. CSSD has a health insurance coordinator in the department whose job is to contact employers to obtain health insurance cards. Once the CSO obtains the cards, he/she sends them to the custodial parent.

In response to Chair Eisenberg, CSSD does not have data available on children enrolled in Medi-Cal. Ms. Cruz reported that the reason the federal government wants to establish health insurance performance measure is to ensure that the child receives proper health insurance coverage rather than Medi-Cal, which is a no-cost service. The emphasis is that health insurance coverage should be taken care of by the parents, and not by the government.

In anticipation of the new measure, Gail Juliano collaborated with HMS, who provides a vehicle for a state's health insurance delivery. CSSD applied for a \$200,000 grant through the County, and asked HMS to interface with custodial parents in their system to obtain health Insurance matches. The program was implemented from December 2006 and tracked results to June 2008. HMS found 5,673 records yielding health insurance matches for children. The problem with the findings was that not all the information was received from the non-custodial parent; some of it dated back to the custodial parent, or a step-parent. Once the information

is available, CSSD contacts the State Department, who then determines whether the parent has obtained private health insurance for the child.

Jennifer Coultas reported that most parents want private health insurance policies, and that DPSS would have more information on enrollment of health insurance, because CSSD's task is only to enforce health insurance for the child. Employers were mandated to enroll the child on the policy. If the parent cancels her Medi-Cal then it's a DPSS matter. Silvia Valencia reported that DPSS policy is for placement of children on the parent's private health insurance.

CALL CENTER: HOW ARE CALLS HANDLED BY THE STATE IVR, AND REFERRED TO LACSD – WILLIAM SCHWARTZ

William Schwartz reported earlier on the call center but distributed information entitled, "ECSS – Enterprise Customer Service Solution: Customer Connect." There were three headings:

- ECSS Self-Service IVR with details regarding Successful log-ins and Unsuccessful log-ins.
- CSE Self-Service Website, which enables on-line access of case information.
- ECSS Direct Call Routing, a more "live" phone line because operator aid is available, however, wait times can go up to fifteen minutes.

COAP: HOW NEW LEGISLATION HAS IMPACTED HANDLING OF COAP CASES; MONTHLY STATISTICS ON COAP CASES FOR 2008; UPDATE ON UAP PROJECT AND NEW PROCEDURES FOR RETRIEVING MONEY FROM WELFARE – LORI CRUZ

Lori Cruz summarized COAP (Compromise of Arrears Payments) as being a program of reducing child support arrears to the State of California. A State-funded contractor conducted a study on delinquency in arrears payments, and the study found that the NCP was responsible for non-payment in arrears. NCPs on average earn less than \$10 thousand a year.

The intent of the program is to review the client's arrears owed and compromise it to a total amount for payment. The program was implemented in late 2004-early 2005, and was intended to be a temporary pilot project. The project was recently reviewed by State analysts and was assessed as meritorious and recommended renewal. The program was renewed in July 2008.

Changes requested by local child support agencies are listed on the DCSS page hand out (copy on file). The most significant change is the criteria for reviewing compromises; it was reduced from \$5 thousand down to \$501, and these are welfare arrears owed to the State. The approval process of compromise payments has now moved from the State to the County; the DCSS has oversight and denial rights but no longer takes an active role in compromise payment approval.

Vice Chair Speir noted that while COAP is a great program, audits should be conducted by the CSSD to ensure arrear payment amounts, in that NCPs have been billed inaccurately by thousands of dollars. A child support audit should be conducted on every COAP case to

ensure accurate amounts.

A State report on COAPs approved and denied, showed Los Angeles County to have the largest number of COAP applications received. A total of 908 COAP applications are in process, with a high number in denials (316) due to the NCP's ineligibility to participate in the program. Some counties pre-screen an NCP but Los Angeles County has not made that standard routine. Approval is made by the CSO's Supervisor for approval by the Director's signature. The agreement is administrative and is not determined by Court.

The compromised amount agreed upon with the NCP amounts to 10% of the arrears owed to the State.

OUTCOME ON DISMISSAL PILOT IN DIVISION 4 AND METHODS OF AVOIDING EXCESSIVE ARREARS UNDER CSE – LORI CRUZ

Lori Cruz reported that Division 4 in South Los Angeles worked on a project that reviewed cases where earnings were unavailable. Instead of delivering summons and service, appointments were scheduled wherein the NCP visits the office, discusses the case and stipulates to a judgment to avoid further arrears. From May-August 2008, 346 appointments were set up, but only 55 NCPs showed up to the office and 18 stipulated to judgment.

The project was cancelled due to the low appearance rate, but a newer and similar project is being developed in the Encino office. The appearance rate in Encino has been encouraging with a 50% show rate the first day, and a 40% show rate for the second day. A case is taken on an established order with two parties, a letter is mailed to the NCP in order to establish a relationship, staff reviews the order for appropriateness, and notifies the NCP of his rights and where payments should be forwarded. This produced a positive contact between the CSSD and custodial parents.

REPORT ON SPECIAL MODIFICATION CALENDAR (REGARDING INCARCERATED/CHILD CARE CASES)

Lisa Garrett reported on the Special Modification Calendar, which is designed to help parents either incarcerated or that require Supplemental Child Care and need to be placed on the Court's calendar. Normally there is a limitation to the number of how many cases that can

be placed on calendar so an agreement was worked out with the Courts so that CSSD can have their own special calendar. The special calendar creates space so that cases can be heard. The numbers of special calendar hearings decreased in late 2008 because they occurred during the conversion, but at the beginning of 2009 the numbers have ramped up. In response to Chair Eisenberg, Ms. Garrett reported that the majority of calendared hearings are for incarcerated parents.

Supplemental Child Care is when the Court orders the NCP to pay half of the provision for day care, and the child is no longer attending day care and hasn't been taken off the order. Because it's a Court order it has to be modified so the dollar amount can be changed. CSSD forwards a notice to the Custodial Parent who is asked if child care payments are being made. If the parent writes back "no", CSSD would move to modify the order in the Courts to remove the supplemental child care. The Call Center has been assisting in contacting the parent on case modifications.

HOW QAPI DIVISION IS BEING RESTRUCTURED – DAVID KILGORE

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Eisenberg declared the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.